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ABSTRACT

This informational book on tobacco is part of a series of three interactive books on tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana; three informational books containing parallel content; and three teacher guides designed to give students in grades five through eight practice in using the information and skills presented in the books. The goal of this book and the accompanying interactive book and teacher guide is to prevent tobacco use by preadolescents. This book discusses the physical and psychological effects of smoking and chewing tobacco and explains why young people should avoid the use of tobacco products. It tells what is wrong with tobacco, gives reasons why some adults say they smoke, explains the meaning of addiction, tells why some people quit smoking, and discusses health problems from tobacco. It explains why some young people start to smoke or use tobacco products, considers tobacco and advertising, notes that many young people never want to start smoking, and describes how people begin to smoke. The book concludes by explaining to students that the decision to smoke is their decision and that they have a choice. (NB)

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TOBACCO: The Real Story

David R. Stronck

Illustrated by Robert Ransom

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1987

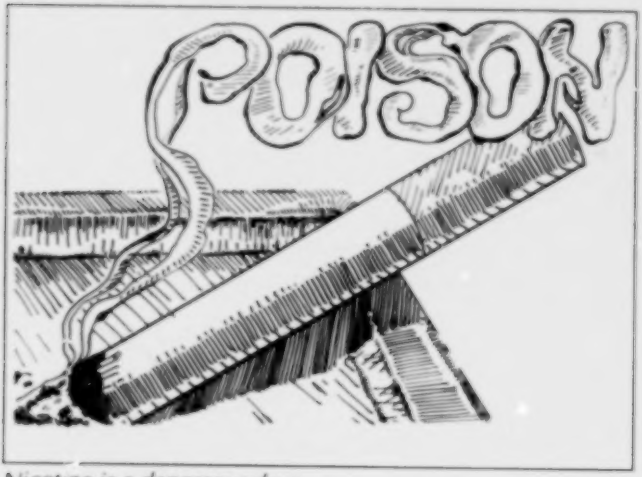
TOBACCO SMOKE

Have you ever been in a room or car filled with cigarette, cigar or pipe smoke? Most people are forced to breathe such air at some time in their lives. Tobacco smoke makes some people cough and feel like they can't breathe. Their eyes begin to water and hurt. Others don't seem bothered by smoke. Which type of person are you?

WHAT'S WRONG WITH TOBACCO?

The main problem with tobacco is that it contains a dangerous drug called nicotine. Nicotine is a natural insecticide the tobacco plant makes to kill insects that might attack it. But our government bans farmers from using nicotine as an insecticide because it is too poisonous to spray on crops.

The amount of nicotine in one cigarette is very small. Yet one cigarette placed in a home's fish tank can quickly kill all the fish in the tank. Isn't



Nicotine is a dangerous drug.

it strange that people like something that is so poisonous?

But they do. They smoke the leaves of the tobacco plant in cigarettes, cigars and pipes. Other people chew tobacco or use snuff. All tobacco brings nicotine into the body of the person who uses it.

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Another problem with tobacco is that it contains tars. Tars are brown, gummy materials that stick to other things. When a smoker inhales, both tars and nicotine go into the lungs. Quickly some of the cells in the lungs die or are no longer able to protect the surface of the lungs. Tars stay in the lungs for a very long time. Adults who smoke must stop for 7 years before their lungs go back to a normal condition.

Tars and nicotine cause cells in the lungs to die.

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Many smokers think they can protect themselves by smoking low-tar or filter cigarettes. But they usually just smoke more of these cigarettes to get the amount of nicotine they're used to. So while they may think they are helping themselves, these smokers are still likely to be less healthy than nonsmokers.

A third problem with cigarettes is smoke. Cigarette smoke contains a colorless, odorless gas called carbon monoxide. This gas also comes from automobiles and factories where wood or other materials are burned.

Our government will not allow people to work in factories where carbon monoxide reaches more than 50 parts per million of the air. This amount can cause headaches and upset stomachs. Laboratory animals show confusion and harm to their blood from this level. In a room where several people are smoking, the amount of carbon monoxide will often go over 50 parts per million. This "secondhand smoke" can af-

Cigarette smoke contains carbon monoxide, a poisonous gas.

fect anyone in the room, whether they are smoking or not.

Special chemicals are added to cigarettes to keep them burning even when the smoker is not puffing the cigarette.These chemicals make cigarettes a dangerous fire hazard. And they are harmful to the inside of the mouth, throat and lungs.

Since 1964 we have suspected that smoking causes lung cancer—a slow and painful way to die. Cigarette makers were forced to print a notice on each package of cigarettes. It said:

Warning: Cigarette Smoking May
Be Hazardous to Your Health.

In 1979 the surgeon general of the United States discovered even more evidence that smoking damages people's bodies. Cigarette packages and ads now must warn people that:

Smoking By Pregnant Women May
Result in Fetal Injury, Premature
Birth, and Low Birth Weight.

Cigarette Smoke Contains Carbon
Monoxide.

Quitting Smoking Now Greatly Reduces
Serious Risks
to Your Health.

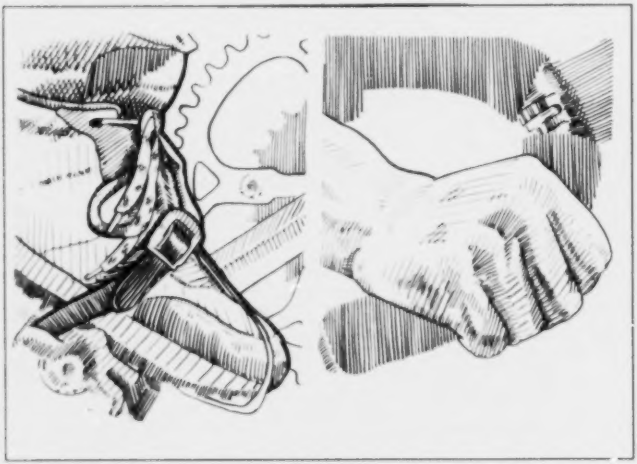
Have you seen these warnings in cigarette ads in magazines, or printed on the packages of cigarettes? So why do people smoke? Why do they buy and use such a dangerous product? Let's take a look.

WHY DO SOME ADULTS SMOKE?

The American Cancer Society asked many adult smokers why they smoke. Here are some of the answers they gave:

- *"Smoking helps me wake up."*
  This is true. Doctors know that nicotine makes the heart beat faster and the blood pressure go up. This makes the person feel more alert.

  Another way to get this feeling is to exercise. If you ride your bicycle to school in the morning, you probably get some of the same alert feelings a smoker gets—without the risks a smoker takes. Can you think of other ways a person might use to wake up?



Riding a bike, you may get the alert feelings a smoker gets.

- *"I like handling the cigarette."*
  Some smokers like to keep their hands busy. So taking the cigarette out of the package, handling it, striking the match or lighter, lighting the cigarette feels good to them. What other things could a person do to keep his or her hands busy?

- *"I like relaxing with a cigarette."*
  Ads try to make people think that smoking is part of enjoying a good dinner, having fun or being

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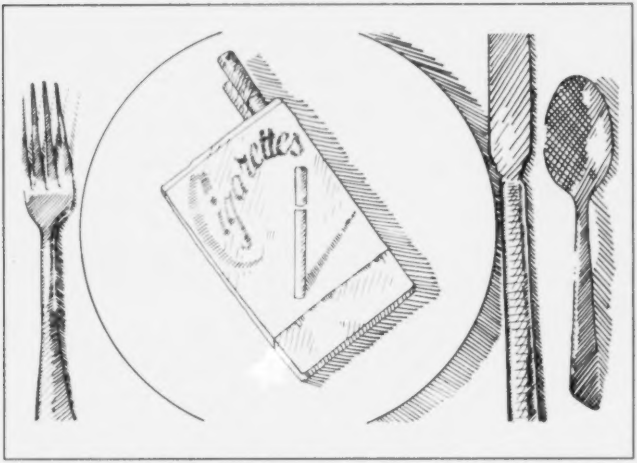
in sports. Do you think people can really ride horses, swim, play tennis and ski while smoking?

The best athletes do not smoke. They know tobacco hurts their breathing. Can you think of ways to relax and have fun without cigarettes?

- *"Smoking helps me stay thin—without cigarettes I'd be fat."*
  Some people do eat less when they smoke. Smoking destroys their sense of taste, so food doesn't taste good to them. Smokers may put cigarettes in their mouths instead of food. Does smoking seem like a good, healthy way to keep from gaining too much weight? Are there other things a person can do to keep from being overweight?

- *"I need a cigarette to help me face my problems."*
  Some smokers think tobacco helps solve their problems. Smoking can take your mind off the problem for a moment, but when you finish the



Smoking is not a healthy way to keep from gaining weight.

cigarette the problem is still there! Can you think of other things people could do about their problems?

- *"I have the habit of smoking."*
  Some people just keep lighting up cigarettes without thinking about what they are doing. When they try to do without cigarettes, they find it's very hard. They may be addicted to cigarettes and not know it.

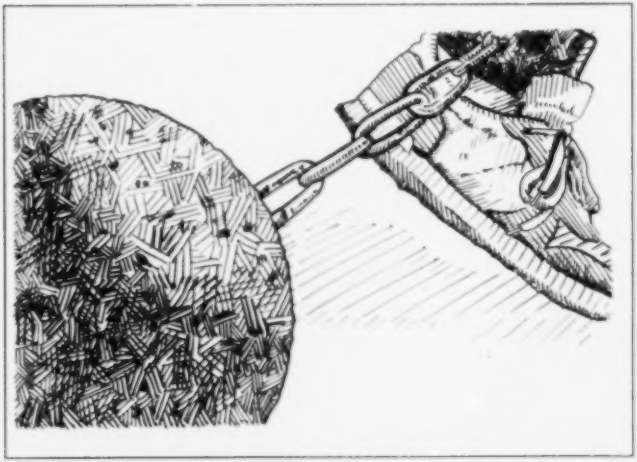
Have you ever asked some adults why they smoke? You may get the same answers that the American Cancer Society got. You will find out that almost everyone who uses tobacco wants to stop. But they can't stop easily because they are addicted. The addiction controls them.

WHAT DOES "ADDICTION" MEAN?

Doctors know that the drug nicotine in tobacco is addictive. An addiction is a habit that is *very* hard to change. It makes people do things they wouldn't normally do to get what they're addicted to—in this case tobacco.

This is why they do not stop smoking even though smoking is dangerous. This is why they don't stop smoking when their friends and family beg them to stop. Almost every adult who smokes will tell young people not to start.

Smoking tobacco, chewing tobacco and snuff are all addictive. Many people get tired of being controlled by this addiction. They know they have lost much of their freedom. They must



Smoking is an addiction that controls you.

always be buying tobacco, matches or lighters, finding ash trays and losing time from work and play.

Very few young people call themselves smokers when they first start smoking. They may be smoking a whole pack of cigarettes each day and still not think they're smokers. They think a person makes a real choice to become a smoker. But people become addicted by slowly drifting

into the habit. The smoker may never make a real choice. But their bodies know they're smokers—cigarettes start working on the body right away. And soon the victim is hooked and can't stop.

In recent years, large numbers of adults have tried to give up smoking. Anyone who has stopped smoking can tell you it isn't easy. Some people pay a lot of money to others to help them stop. Some smokers never stop, even though they want to very much. They are addicted.

Can you think of other things that are addictive?

SOME REASONS WHY ADULTS QUIT SMOKING (OR NEVER START)

Some people smoke until they become very sick and their doctor tells them they will die if they don't stop. Others stop smoking (or never start) for reasons that have little to do with their health. Here are some of their reasons:

- Smoking causes bad breath and smelly clothes. Kissing someone who smokes is unpleasant. Many people don't want to get close to a smoker, let alone kiss him or her.

- Smoking makes teeth and fingers turn yellow and dirty looking. The stains on the hands are long lasting and ugly and don't wash away with soap. Some smokers use a special tooth paste to help remove the yellow stains on the teeth, but nothing can make a smoker's teeth as white as they were before.

- Many people don't like to be around smokers because they don't want to breathe smoke. This secondhand smoke is annoying and dangerous to their health. It gets into the clothes and hair of everyone around the smoker and smells bad.

  Many towns have passed laws against smoking in restaurants and other public places. So smokers must smoke only in certain places. They have lost the freedom to go where other people want to enjoy clean air.

Kissing someone who smokes is unpleasant.

- Smoking destroys much of the sense of smell and taste. Smokers lose most of the joy from foods, drinks, flowers, the air. Everything tastes and smells like cigarettes.

- Smoking causes the skin to wrinkle. It makes people look much older. Most adults like to look as young as they really are.

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- Cigarettes burn holes in clothing, car seats, furniture, floors and carpets. A smoker can easily drop ashes, fire or the whole cigarette. Smokers often leave cigarettes "just for a minute" and then forget about them. These forgotten cigarettes can cause ugly burns or fires.

- Cigarettes cause many major fires. People who smoke in bed can start a fire without knowing it, turn out the light and fall asleep. Most hotel and motel fires are caused by cigarettes. Thousands of people die from fires started by smokers or by children playing with matches that belong to smokers.

- Tobacco is expensive. It's hard to talk about the price of cigarettes because it keeps going up. To make things easy, let's say a package of cigarettes is $1. (It is actually much higher in some places). A person who smokes a package of cigarettes a day will be spending around $30 a month or $365 a year on tobacco! If a person started smoking in the 6th grade, how much money would he or she spend by the age of 18?

Can you think of other things you might spend that much money on?

HEALTH PROBLEMS FROM TOBACCO

All these reasons are good reasons not to smoke. But the biggest reason adults stop or want to stop smoking is that smoking makes them sick. Here are some health problems smokers are likely to have:

- Smokers are three times more likely than others to cough. Smoking begins to destroy the lungs soon after a person starts smoking. They cannot breathe as well. Their lungs can no longer move mucus well. Mucus is the slippery liquid that coats and protects the inside of the nose, mouth, lungs and stomach.

- Smoking begins the steps leading to a disease called emphysema. This disease cannot be cured. A person with emphysema has big holes in the lungs and they have trouble breathing. Some people with emphysema must carry an oxygen tank to help them breathe. Almost all

people with emphysema got the disease from smoking.

- Smoking causes lung cancer. Nine out of ten persons who get lung cancer smoke. The smoke changes some of the lung cells into cancer cells. These cells grow out of control and crowd out healthy cells. Cancer tumors grow as bloody, stinking masses that are very painful. Few people with lung cancer live more than a couple of years after a doctor finds the cancer.

- Smoking causes cancers in many other parts of the body: the lips, mouth, throat, stomach and bladder. Chewing tobacco can lead to cancer of the lips, tongue and throat.

- More smokers die from heart attacks than from cancers. Smokers are four times more likely to have a heart attack than nonsmokers. And a smoker who has a heart attack is 40% more likely to die than a nonsmoker who has a heart attack.

Young people who smoke already show greater deposits of fat in the blood vessels leading to and from the heart. When blood can't get to the heart (because the vessels are blocked with fat deposits), the person has a heart attack.

- Babies of mothers who smoke while they are pregnant are often born too small and too early. Heavy smoking greatly increases the chances of having deformed babies. These babies some-

Smoking and chewing tobacco can lead to cancer of the lips.

times can't pass food through their stomachs. Some die before they are born.

As you can see, there are many good reasons not to smoke. Yet many young people start smoking, especially in grades 6, 7 and 8. Why do you think young people start to smoke?

WHY DO YOUNG PEOPLE START TO SMOKE OR USE TOBACCO?

A large group of students who smoke answered questions about why they started. Most of their reasons have nothing to do with wanting tobacco, at least not at first. Here are some of their reasons:

- They want to pretend they are adults. They know that some adults use some kind of tobacco. The law doesn't allow tobacco products to be sold to young people. Some young people feel that doing something only adults are supposed to do automatically makes them grown up.

- They want to be accepted by their friends who smoke. Tobacco is a way to become a member of some gangs. They meet in small groups and stand around smoking cigarettes. Others chew tobacco or use snuff. Do you think the only way to be a part of such groups is to use tobacco? Does this seem like a good reason to start smoking?

- They think smoking is fun and glamorous. Cigarette ads make smoking seem like a grownup and romantic thing to do. Young people who smoke probably believe the ads.

- They think smoking must be pleasant. At first the smoke burns the throat and chokes the smoker. Many youngsters ignore this because they are waiting for the pleasure of smoking. They believe people must smoke because they like it.

- They want to try what is forbidden. It's hard for young people to believe adults who tell them how dangerous tobacco is, when so many adults use it.

- They want to show their independence. Some young people want to act against the advice of parents, teachers and other adults. In this way they think they are showing their strength to act alone.

TOBACCO AND ADVERTISING

The R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company puts an ad in some magazines and newspapers. It says, "Don't smoke. For one thing, smoking has always been an adult custom...you may not be old enough to smoke." This ad tells young people not to smoke because smoking is an adult thing to do. But the advice causes many youngsters to want to try the forbidden and join the adult world by smoking.

Some young athletes start chewing tobacco because other players on their team are doing it. They watch TV and see some of the stars chewing and spitting. Magazine ads show people in sports using tobacco. The ads don't say that chewing tobacco can lead to cancer of the mouth, gums or throat. And they don't mention

that a 19-year-old man recently died of cancer of the tongue from chewing tobacco.

Virginia Slims cigarettes sponsors a tennis tournament for women. The ads show healthy women. This ad seems to say that smoking cigarettes and being an athlete go together. But every coach knows that a smoker loses much breathing power. It only takes a few cigarettes to be slowed down in running. So even one smoker on a team can slow down everyone else.

MANY YOUNG PEOPLE NEVER WANT TO USE TOBACCO

If you are lucky you may have little or no temptation to take up smoking or chewing. One or more of the following reasons may make it easy for you to say no:

- Your friends do not smoke or chew. They all think smoking or chewing tobacco is silly and disgusting and a waste of money and health.

- Your parents do not smoke. There is no tobacco around your house and you have not been around many adults who smoke.

- You hate the smell of tobacco in the air, on furniture and especially on people—in their clothes, hair and on their breath.

- You think cigarettes and chewing tobacco taste horrible and gross and spitting is disgusting.

HOW PEOPLE BEGIN SMOKING OR USING TOBACCO

Your decisions about tobacco may not be so easy. You may be forced to make some grown-up choices while you are still young. But if you know you don't want to use tobacco you don't have to. No one can make you smoke.

Everyone is different. Young people who begin using tobacco do so in many different situations. Would you be tempted to start in any of the following examples? Can you think of ways you

might avoid smoking in each of these situations?

- *A friend asks you to smoke a cigarette with him or her. This is not a bully forcing you. This is a friend. Perhaps it is your birthday party and the friend says, "Happy birthday. Here's a present for you. Now that you're 12 years old, try a cigarette and join the older world."*

  How could you say no without hurting the friend's feelings? Your friend might reason that one cigarette won't hurt anything, or that trying a few cigarettes doesn't mean you're a real smoker.

  You could take the cigarette, put it aside and not smoke it. If your friend asks why you don't light it you could reply that you're busy doing other things. You could also say you need to think about such an important decision as smoking and that you'd like to find out more about cigarettes before you decide to smoke.

❒ *Your friends are smoking at a party. No one says you should smoke. But it seems like a good way to join in having a good time.*

Not joining your friends is hard. But it is easier than trying to quit after you have become addicted to tobacco. Why not be a leader instead of a follower? There are probably others in your group who would rather not smoke but who

Be a leader! Say no to tobacco.

aren't strong enough to say "No thank you." They will be glad if you say it first!

❒ *You are alone at home and your parents, who smoke cigarettes, have left their cigarettes and matches on the kitchen table. You know about smoking because you have watched your parents light up and inhale smoke all your life.*

You may be curious about trying a cigarette. What is the flavor like? Will it taste good? Here is what you can expect: you will have a burning, choking feeling in your mouth and throat. You will cough and the cigarette may even upset your stomach. Your eyes may begin to burn and water. Does this sound like fun? Many youngsters keep trying in hope of finding something more pleasant. If they try long enough, they become addicted. Why not make up your mind now about what makes sense to you?

IT'S YOUR CHOICE

By reading this book, you have learned much about tobacco and its use. Some people your age use tobacco without really thinking about what they are doing. You might want to make a choice to show that you are old enough to study a situation and make a decision based on facts instead of drifting along without knowing what is happening to you or your body. Think about it. It's your life. You have only one body to care for.

You have only one body to care for.

About this Book

TOBACCO: The Real Story is part of an important new series of books designed to help young people make informed, responsible decisions about drug use. Other books in the series include *MARIJUANA: The Real Story* and *ALCOHOL: The Real Story*.

The development of these books was supported by funds from the National Institute of Child Health and Development. They have gone through extensive testing with preadolescents and have been carefully reviewed by substance abuse professionals. The committee of professionals not only gave initial input to determine appropriate content, but also reviewed the books during development.

The series provides young people with critical information about substance abuse, and prepares them to deal with social situations in which they are most likely to encounter marijuana, alcohol and tobacco.

About the Author

Author David R. Stronck, PhD, is professor of science education at California State University at Hayward. He has extensive experience writing school texts and has published numerous articles in scholarly journals. He has been the editor of the *California Science Teacher's Journal* and serves as a consultant to school districts.

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Also available as part of this series are three interactive fiction books. *Serena's Secret, Danny's Dilemma* and *Christy's Chance* combine substance abuse information and models for resisting peer pressure in the popular interactive adventure book format. The characters in these interactive books are presented with choices about drug use. The reader makes a decision for the character, turns to the appropriate page and learns the consequences of that particular choice. One interactive story can be reread many times. Each time the story is different depending on the reader's choices.

LEARN THE REAL STORY ABOUT TOBACCO

This book tells you the facts about smoking and chewing tobacco. Many young people don't really make a choice about using tobacco. They let others tell them what to do. *TOBACCO: The Real Story* gives you the information you need to make **your own** decision.

What's wrong with using tobacco?
Why do some adults smoke?
What does addiction mean?
Why do people quit smoking?
What health problems do smokers have?
Why do some people use tobacco?
How can you say no to tobacco?

It's your life! Be sure you're the one who's in charge of it.

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